



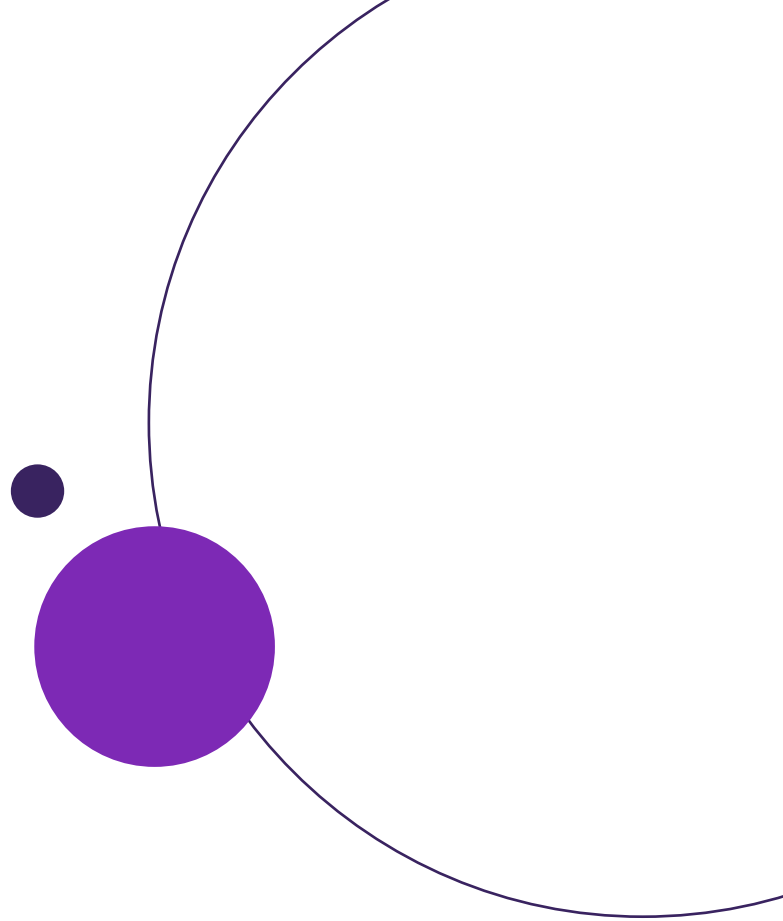
Google Reviews

# Best Practice Guide

Building trust in a  
digital world

 [boks-international.com](https://boks-international.com)

Correct as of April 2026



# Summary

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In the professional services sector, reputation is built on trust, expertise, and reliability. Historically, this was managed through local networks and word-of-mouth. In 2026, the conversation has moved to a digital-first environment. For BOKS International member firms, a Google Business Profile (GBP) is no longer a secondary marketing channel, it is an important digital storefront and trust validator for global and local clients alike.

This guide provides a comprehensive framework for accounting and legal firms to navigate the complexities of Google Reviews, balancing growth strategy with strict professional ethical standards.



## INTRODUCTION

# The strategic importance of online trust

The digital landscape for professional services has undergone a fundamental shift over recent years. Potential clients no longer just search for information, they are also looking to validate their decision before they make contact.



### The Digital Storefront

For most prospects, your Google Profile is the first encounter with your brand, often occurring before they ever visit your website.



### Social Proof

Statistics indicate that over 90% of consumers in the professional services sector read reviews before contacting a firm. A lack of reviews or a poor rating can be interpreted as a lack of experience or a sign of poor service.



### The Shift to Zero-Click Searches

In 2026, over 60% of searches end without a user visiting a website. They find your contact details, services, and reputation entirely within Google Search results or from AI.

## MEET YOUR EXPERT

# Francisco Escandon



This guide is informed by the insights of **Francisco Escandon**, **International Business Development Manager** and the **Chair of the BOKS International Marketing Committee**.

Francisco brings over 15 years of experience in international marketing, specifically tailored to the legal, tax, and accounting sectors. His participation within BOKS has focused on empowering member firms to convert digital reputation into measurable business outcomes. Using these strategies, his own firm successfully generated high-value international leads, demonstrating that a well-managed Google presence is a direct engine for Return on Investment (ROI).



## THE BASICS

# What is a Google Business Profile (GBP)?

A Google Business Profile is a free tool provided by Google that allows business owners to manage their official digital presence across Google Search and Maps. For accounting and legal firms, it acts as a verified business listing that displays your firm’s name, location, contact details, and client reviews.

## Where does it appear?

- **Google Search (Knowledge Panel):** When someone searches specifically for your firm’s name, your profile appears as a detailed information box on the right side of the search results (desktop) or as a prominent card at the top (mobile).
- **Google Maps:** Your firm is represented by a pin on the map. When users click the pin, they see your full profile, photos, and star ratings.
- **The Local 3-Pack:** When users search for general keywords (e.g., “Tax Law Firm in Chile”), Google displays the top three relevant local firms next to a map. Appearing here is the primary goal of Local SEO.

## Your professional profile

This is your identity, and needs to be actively looked after and managed by your firm. While your core contact details will change rarely, others will have the ability to comment on your services in a public way. This needs to be looked at and monitored regularly.

## The Pros and Cons of actively managing your profile

Feature	The Pros (Strategic Value)	The Cons (Risks of Neglect)
Search Visibility	Dominance in the Local 3-Pack (top map results) and enhanced SEO.	Invisibility to local and international prospects searching for your expertise.
Trust & Social Proof	People trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations.	Prospects will choose a competitor with more Social Proof (e.g. 50 reviews vs. 0).
AI Recommendation	Search engines like Gemini and ChatGPT prioritize firms with high-quality review sentiment.	AI models may dismiss your firm as low-quality or unhelpful if data is missing.
Lead Generation	Francisco's firm realized \$35,000 in new business from a single Google contact.	Loss of potential revenue to firms that present a more professional digital image.



## FOUNDATION

# Optimising your Google Business Profile

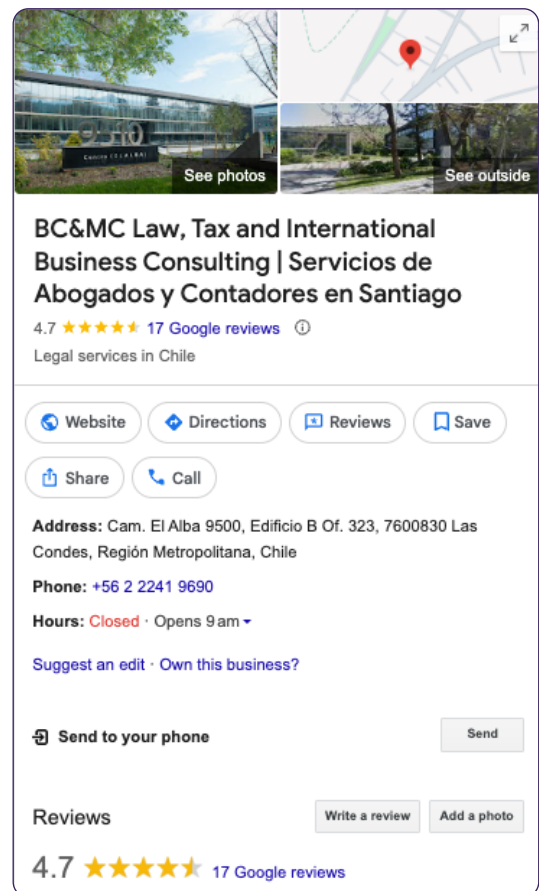
Before soliciting reviews, your profile must reflect the high-tier standards of a BOKS International member.

## Accurate categorisation

Firms must choose their primary category with precision. Generic labels like “Legal Services” or “Accountant” are less effective than specific identifiers such as “Tax Attorney,” “Corporate Lawyer,” or “Certified Public Accountant”.

## Visual authenticity

- **Avoid Stock Photos:** Authentic images of your office entrance, reception, meeting rooms, and professional team headshots build immediate human connection and look more authentic.
- **Video Integration:** From 2026, Google prioritises multimedia content. Short introductory videos (under 60 seconds) explaining your firm’s approach can significantly increase user engagement.



## Keywords and description

Your business description should naturally incorporate search terms (e.g., “International tax planning in [YOUR City]”) and maintain a human voice. It should clearly articulate your unique value proposition to both human readers and AI crawlers.



# Reviews and why people leave them

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The reviews others can leave are the main focus for the social proof. What others think of you can have a big impact on others' decision to contact you.

Some reviews are provided without any prompting, while others can be actively sought.

Clients typically leave reviews for three reasons:

- **Appreciation:** Clients who have experienced a significant win or felt personally supported often feel a sense of loyalty and want to reward your team's hard work.
- **Guiding others:** Many professionals feel a duty to help their peers find reliable partners. They leave reviews to guide other business owners toward (or away from) a service.
- **Providing Feedback:** In a digital world, clients use reviews to feel heard. They want to ensure their experience—positive or negative—is acknowledged by the firm.

Cultivating as many positive reviews from clients as possible therefore can have a significant impact on your lead generation.

## STRATEGY

# Managing the generation of reviews

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Professional firms must be surgical rather than broad in their approach to requesting reviews from clients and contacts.

## The optimum

The most effective time to ask for a review is immediately after a successful delivery of a service where the client experienced considerable benefit: a significant tax saving, a favourable court ruling, or the closure of an M&A deal.

Building this into your systems can be an easy and natural thing to do:

- **Direct links:** Use personalised emails containing a direct link to the review section of your GBP to make it as easy as possible.
- **Consistency:** Aim for a steady stream (2–3 per month) rather than a sudden burst of 20 or more. Rapid spikes can trigger Google's spam filters, so doing a little and often is best.



# Ethical and regulatory compliance

Accounting and legal practitioners operate under strict regulatory bodies. Generally it's best to assume a common sense approach, which would take into consideration:

- **No incentives (bribery):** Never offer discounts, gifts, or fees in exchange for reviews. This violates both Google's policies and professional ethical codes.
- **Client confidentiality:** Responses must never confirm a client relationship or mention specific case details. Maintain privacy at all costs.
- **Only accepting very positive reviews:** While you can prioritise outreach to happy clients, it is bad practice to avoid neutral or even negative reviews. Positively engaging is better than trying to have it removed.

## Responding to all reviews

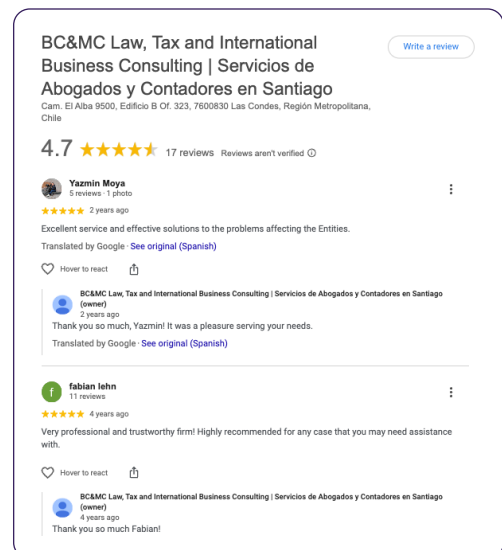
Every review, positive or negative, requires a professional response within 24–48 hours.

### For Positive Reviews

1. **Acknowledge:** Address the reviewer by name.
2. **Gratitude:** Thank them for their trust and for taking the time to share.
3. **Keyword Inclusion:** Subtly mention the service provided to help Google's algorithm associate your firm with that expertise e.g. "We were pleased to assist with your international tax planning".

### For Negative Reviews

1. **Pause:** Do not respond emotionally. Wait 2–4 hours to cool off.
2. **Pivot:** Acknowledge the feedback without getting defensive.
3. **Private:** Immediately offer a way to discuss the matter offline e.g. "Please contact our Practice Manager so we can resolve this directly".





## IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

# A 30-day action plan

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### Audit & benchmarking

Search for your firm and three local competitors. Note their average rating and review volume.



### Profile optimisation

Update all photos, descriptions, and services. Ensure your Name, Address, and Phone number are consistently presented.



### The pilot

Identify 5 loyal, long-term clients. Send a personalised request from their main Partner or contact.



### Ongoing management

Assign a member of staff to monitor alerts and respond to feedback within 48 hours. And, build in a request for feedback to all clients when work has been completed.

## More information

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For more information please feel free to contact:

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